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Book Notices.

A Study of Religion.

A Study of Religion ; its Sources and Contents. By James Martineau, D.D., LL.D. 2 vols., pp. 392, 391. New York : Macmillan and Co. \$4.50.

These volumes, though by their title presumably coming within the scope of the STUDENT, in reality deal with matters which are outlying or rather which underlie its sphere. The "Study" of Religion here entered upon is a philosophical and metaphysical examination into the grounds of religious belief, not a study of Religion, as it has assumed concrete form among men. Of the inestimable value of the former line of research there can be no doubt. It underlies all objective and concrete investigation. It lays the subjective basis for all such studies. Dr. Martineau is a subtle reasoner, wielding a matchless style, limpid and sparkling, a keen defender of the religious element in the human soul, its presence, its power, its witness to God. One cannot help confessing to a feeling of disappointment that he did not also examine the other side, the objective facts ; that he did not make a study of "Religions" as well as of "Religion." With his philosophical mind and ample learning he could have produced a most helpful work. What is specially needed, now-a-days, is the treatment by a religious metaphysician of the elements of biblical religion as given in the Old Testament and the New—a study of the facts and their significance from the point of view of the universal religious element in man. Rightly handled, it would clear up many problems in biblical study, lay a basis for objective work, and furnish one of the strongest presentations of the uniqueness of the biblical revelation.

The Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God ; or, Christ's Teaching according to the Synoptical Gospels. By Alexander Balmain Bruce, D.D. Pp. 344. New York : Scribner and Welford. \$2.00.

The exegetical and theological writings of Prof. Bruce have begun to be not a few. Everything that he has written is valuable both because of its matter and because of its manner of presentation. This statement includes and is true of this work, his latest contribution to the study of New Testament thought. It consists of a study of the biblical theology of the Synoptical Gospels. The topics treated are such as these : "Christ's Idea of the Kingdom ;" "Christ's Attitude toward the Mosaic Law ;" "Christ's Doctrine of God and Man ;" "The Righteousness of the Kingdom ;" "The Death of Jesus and its Significance," etc. These chapters are preceded by a "critical introduction," which is certainly characterized by acute criticism and a degree of freedom in the handling of the Gospels which is surprising. This freedom is sometimes veiled by a curious circumlocution which might impose upon a careless reader, by which the opinions of some other writer are presented, enforced and made the basis of investigation while the author himself nowhere either disavows them or professes to accept them as his own. It is difficult, also, for the ordinary student to see how the historical character and trustworthiness of Luke's Gospel can be maintained on the critical basis which is accepted in this volume. Fortunately, however, these views do not seem to affect the presentation of the theology of Jesus Christ which forms the bulk of the work.

As to this the chief element of the book, it may be said that in the main it is thoroughly satisfactory. Dr. Bruce strongly antagonizes Weiss' conception of the close relationship of the work and teaching of Jesus to the Old Testament life and teaching. He maintains with an over-emphasis the uniqueness of Jesus, taking a position which, to many, will seem to make the Old Testament of small account for present life and teaching, certainly in its Messianic elements. Weiss is doubtless at fault in the arbitrary character of much of his interpretation, but as yet, from the historical point of view his presentation, of the life of Jesus Christ is unexcelled. Not the least of the excellences is the way in which he brings out our Lord's constant and close relation to the Old Testament life. Still, it will not hurt a student to be put on his guard against unqualified dependence on Weiss by this book of Prof. Bruce. Ministers will find their knowledge of the Gospels broadened and corrected by it. It is a stimulating work. The external form and style of it are worthy of all praise.

Systematic Theology and the Bible.

Dogmatic Theology. By William G. T. Shedd, D.D. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$7.00.

Christian Doctrine Harmonized and its Rationality Vindicated. By John Steinfort Kedney, D.D. 2 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Systematic Theology; a Compendium and Commonplace-book, designed for the use of Theological Students. By Augustus Hopkins Strong, D.D. Second edition, revised and enlarged. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. \$5.00.

Whither? A Theological Question for the Times. By Charles Augustus Briggs, D.D. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.75.

These four works, dealing with questions of theology, have been rightly taken as signs of the times, as indications of the intense interest among thinking men of our day in matters of theological thought. From the standpoint of this journal, the standpoint of biblical study, it is worth while to consider and estimate them. What is their attitude toward the Bible? The first work is not in these respects entirely satisfactory. In the treatment of "Bibliology" occur statements like these: "Biblical history, chronology and geography differs (*sic*) from corresponding matter in uninspired literature, by being unmingled with error." This statement would not be generally regarded as true of chronology as all biblical interpreters admit. Again, in speaking of Satan's words to Eve and those of Job's friends it is said "those words were actually spoken and they are recorded with infallible accuracy." This is not in accord with the best orthodox exegesis which does not demand that the book of Job or the early chapters of Genesis be taken as literal history. The former doubtless is a dramatic poem and the latter may be poetical or symbolic. But apart from the matter bearing directly on the Scriptures, the use made of biblical material in the development and proof of doctrine is neither sufficiently full and distinct nor based on sound principles of interpretation. The old proof-text-collection-method is the prevailing one. Of Dr. Shedd's ability and strength in abstract theological reasoning there can be but one opinion. It is masterly. The Christian world cannot but be grateful to him for so convincing and so massive a defence of its ancient doctrines. If only there had been an adequate treatment of Scripture and Scripture material, the work would have been well nigh perfect. The second treatise is confessedly speculative not biblical. One might turn over dozens of pages without finding a single reference to such a work as the Bible. The author's treatment of Inspiration is not so clear as one could desire and more authority is given to the Chris-